

# The Eco-logical Way to Grow Food



Learning from Nature



Recognising that much of our land is in poor condition and would work better with a few repairs, many of us are joining the groundswell of farmers and gardeners using regenerative approaches to grow food.

The challenge is how to do it.

It's not hard to find resources explaining how to use different practices like applying compost and biological fertilisers, using zero-till or no-dig gardening, cover crops, crop rotations, mulch, agroforestry, and so on...

But how do we choose the best practices for our growing conditions, livestock, crops, and the soil, pest and other issues holding us back?

1. Understanding what we need to regenerate – the ecological functions in our farms and gardens and,
2. Developing practices mimicking how these functions get naturally repaired.

Using this 'eco-logical' approach is not complicated. In fact, the more we delve into how Nature gets ecosystems functioning again, the more *eco-logical* the solutions become! Established practices become a source and inspiration for our ideas rather than recipes to follow.



Take, for example, getting our nutrient cycle working again.

Soil ecosystems don't normally have access to truck or wheelbarrow loads of minerals, mulch, compost and fertilisers - they have to rely on the resources they have available!



Science shows us that what's crucial is changing how we manage our land to produce a generous, diverse and preferably consistent food supply for our soil ecosystem in addition to food for ourselves and our livestock. We can then leave our soil organisms to maintain soil structure and get our nutrient recycling system naturally supplying food to our crops.



Most soils have become degraded because we have designed our farms and gardens to maximise plant growth for human and livestock consumption. As a result, soil organisms get a "lousy catering service: the menu is limited, portions are small, and the service unreliable!"

## Your climate doesn't matter or property size...

Farmers, smallholders, market, community, and home gardeners from the cold north of Scotland to the hot, sultry tropics and arid landscapes of Africa use this approach. The principles are the same. Tools, techniques and species differ as growers adapt the ecological principles to their growing conditions.



Hazel trees and  
Winter wheat -  
England  
(© www.efrc.com)



Young Gliricidia  
trees and Maize  
- Africa  
(© www.cgiar.org)

## Messiness isn't required...

Growers get fewer pest issues by planting flowers attracting beneficial insects whether they are planted in tidy rows in and around fields, in geometrically designed Potager garden beds or jumbled together.

## Benefits of using Eco-logic

We combine the expertise Nature has developed over 400 million years with our ingenuity to:

- ✓ Grow nourishing food
- ✓ Get off the treadmill of substituting for Nature's free ecological services with fertilisers, pest controls, spades and 420 horsepower, six-cylinder tractors!
- ✓ Develop ecosystems capable of weathering the storms of unpredictable seasons
- ✓ Make the practical act of growing food a solution to rather than a cause of climate change

And have the joy of bringing Nature back into our farms and gardens.

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